



# Monolith



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## Chapter 1 by Brock Thompson

The crew had sailed for months. Two men had died on the voyage.

It was the most powerful, darkest storm in two centuries when the small boat came upon The Monolith. It was massive. Taller than Everest and wider than it too, it was a massive black obsidian obelisk on an island of rock.

Who created it? Nobody knew. Even modern technology could not make a structure so massive, so perfectly smooth.

And the writing. Massive runes that nobody could understand carved into the sides of The Monolith.

The crew was here to explore it.

## Chapter 2 by Phantim



As the men began unloading the supplies, I again read the diary of the man who had first discovered it. The lone survivor of his crew.

The entry was as follows:

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hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

Theosophists have guessed at the awesome grandeur of the cosmic cycle wherein our world and human race form transient incidents. They have hinted at strange survival in terms which would freeze the blood if not masked by a bland optimism. But it is not from them that there came the single glimpse of forbidden aeons which chills me when I think of it and maddens me when I dream of it... That damn black tower.

### Chapter 3 by Harlander



Hold on, that wasn't the surviving crew member's diary, it was the opening to legendary horror writer H.P. Lovecraft's seminal short story, The Call of Cthulhu. For some reason I had a copy of the February 1928 issue of Weird Tales on top of the pile of logbooks, audio recordings and research materials that'd been recovered from the original expedition.

The surviving crewman from that first expedition, a sturdy Dane by the name of Ingvar Alexanersen, had been found wandering the streets of Esbjerg and taken into the care of a local psychiatric institution.

I'd kept the recording from one of his earlier interviews, and was listening to it as the rest of the crew were moving their equipment onto the island.

"That damn black tower!" Ingvar had shouted, his voice twisted by the strain of madness. This was a translation, of course. I'd had a top-of-the-line linguasoft uploaded to my headware before we set out on the expedition. "I wish I'd never heard that it existed! The things I've seen, you wouldn't believe! And better that you do not! I cannot think for the fear now I know what the monolith means."

Unfortunately, the session was concluded before Ingvar could enlighten me about the meaning of the obsidian edifice.

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a few fragments off the monolith and analyse the material. The previous expedition had only been armed with hammers and chisels, and could barely make a dent on it.

I almost dropped the case containing the laser diode on my foot when I heard the sudden scream from the island...

#### Chapter 4 by Harlander



I recognized the voice. It was Bernard, an anthropologist out of the Republic of Northumbria who'd signed up in the hope of drawing some correlation between the strange symbols on the monolith and the ancient writings of humankind.

He didn't match the stereotypes of his country. Northumbrians were reknowned as a stolid, stoical lot. Bernard was a sensitive, willowy chap, who'd suffered greatly after Arendye and Becskei were washed away in the great typhoon we'd struggled through. Once we'd finally landed, though, he seemed much more animated, eager to push his despair aside by launching headfirst into his work.

Apparently it hadn't gone as well as we'd all hoped. I set the case down and made my way quickly onto the island. I'd planned to take the time to savour my first footfall there, but such plans are ever victims of circumstance.

Bernard's scream had tailed off into a high, wretched keening. He knelt before the monolith, eyes wide, staring at the face of the monolith. As I drew close, he lunged towards me, grabbing at my arm like a drowning man clawing for a lifebuoy.

"Fates preserve," I said. "What on Earth is the matter?" Bernard mumbled incoherently and pointed feebly towards the monolith. As far as I could tell, his hand gestured towards more of the same gibberish that covered the rest of the structure. I furrowed my brow. "What does it say?" was all I could think to ask.

Bernard drew in a wheezing breath, and in a trembling voice, told me.

*"It says... They died because of you."*

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Chapter 5 by Smully

A warm gust swept across my face, a brief foreboding that pierced my heart and ran its sickening fingers down my spine as my gaze unwillingly locked on

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Bernard's - those furious, terrified eyes! A hundred lifetimes of horror had settled in those deep green crevasses that carved into his irises, which screamed "We have seen too much".

And the Monolith loomed down upon us.

I shuddered suddenly, and wrested my arm from the crazed anthropologist's iron grip. "Assemble your thoughts and your mind, Bernard! The sea and spray toys with you, better it! Better it, beyond the bitter end-times, they certain nigh come a-singing!" The old blessing rolled off my tongue, almost frantically. Protective, empowering verses chanted by wives and sisters and mothers and daughters, and husbands and brothers and fathers and daughters, to sailors set out across the waves and tides to unknown horizons. I blinked salt from my eyes, and turned to the obelisk which blocked out the sun. Bernard released a wail which rapidly dwindled to a whimper and his knees shook, threatening to give way beneath the frail man, but he too faced the Monolith.

And it loomed over us all.

Bernard's dreadful words echoed in my ears. But how? It cannot be true...I took a step towards the obsidian leviathan, more fearsome than the Typhoons of summer, more ferocious than maelstroms and the Dark Creatures that lurked beneath them. As I inched closer, the glyphs seemed to warp and move, till they flashed in and out of recognition, into faces, into words, back to the jumbled mess. A girl shot me a look of equal parts hatred and sadness, and in a flash of brunette was naught but scratches on stone, then two men. Soaked, gray, pleading, scared. Water poured forth from their mouths and eyes, and I choked. Drowning!

Arendye, Becskei, drowning me!

As I felt my mouth with a quivering hand only to find it as bone-dry and shrivelled as the moment I set foot on this God-forsaken rock, I knew it truly wasn't the sea and spray driving Bernard - and now, perhaps, me - to the brink of hopeless insanity, tearing every secret crime and love and loss from our very marrow.

A presence in my mind loomed over me.

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